Frequently Asked Questions

Who can volunteer?

Anyone with a smartphone (or tablet with cellular connectivity) may volunteer to help. You don't even need to be a resident of the state. The Nebraska Public Service Commission (NPSC) is searching for volunteers all over the state. Why not be the volunteer for your area?

How do I get the app?

The NPSC's testing app by Mobile Pulse is available for download through your smartphone's app store. Download and install the app as you would any other app and then forget about, no further action is required on your part. This link will take you to the correct app store from your phone: https://dashboard.mobilepulse.com/admin/api/getApp?org=0. Or scan this QR code:

The app requires use of location services for the performance tests, but don't worry, there is no personal or identifiable information transferred.

How does this app help me?

There are several important reasons why residents may want to participate in the NPSC's mobile testing app program. First, the results will be available to the state broadband mapping program and used to update maps available to the public. Governments can utilize detailed maps to communicate with wireless vendors and help evaluate new cell tower locations and implement public safety communication plans. When wireless networks improve, the community is safer because cellular 911 calls are clearer, emergency notifications work better, and first responders gain better access to critical field applications.

Second, participation will ensure the mapping of connectivity and performance of wireless networks in *your* area of the state. While we can't promise any specific problem area will be fixed, one can expect that an *unknown* problem area will *not* be fixed! When discrepancies are found between the wireless vendor maps and the government maps, the vendors are notified so they are aware of the problem. Ultimately the information may go all the way up to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for national consumer advocacy on broadband issues.

In what ways have organizations used this service?
Mobile Pulse provides a rich set of tools that will allow governments to:
- Understand current performance of mobile wireless networks
- Negotiate improved cellular agreements
- Assist in troubleshooting mobile application performance issues
- Develop better mobile device policies and strategies
- Understand geographic areas with poor or insufficient performance

- Utilize real data to assist in evaluating new cellular tower locations
- Participate in state, national and public safety broadband mapping efforts

What is the battery impact on devices running Mobile Pulse?

The app uses minimal device resources. The software wakes up periodically, takes a GPS reading, performs a quick test of the network, and then goes back to sleep, utilizing very little battery power. In addition, the service has a built in battery protection that turns the service off if the device's battery gets too low.

What data plan is required and will the service cause extra data charges?

The app will stop testing if testing results in 100 MB of data consumption in a month. This amount is a low percentage of today's typical data plans in the 1-4GB/month range. Residents with data plans less than 1GB should not install the app.

Are there privacy concerns?

The Mobile Pulse testing app collects no personal information and never asks for identifiable information. The app tests the mobile network every once in a while and only associates the results to the location of the test, not to a person. Because the app doesn't collect any identifiable information during the test, there is no way for anyone to know who was at the test location. You can read the full privacy policy on Mobile Pulse's website.

Will my phone be spammed or filled with advertisements?

No. Volunteers running the testing app will never receive any ads, marketing, or solicitations. The app does not display advertisements and the company will not add them in the future. The company does not ask for, nor collect your email, phone number or any other way to contact you. The purpose of this app is to study mobile wireless connectivity and speeds, so you will not be spammed as a result of running this app.

Can someone find me or track my location if I install this app?

Absolutely not. The NPSC's broadband team, the state, your local government, nor any other entity will be able to track a phone's location as a result of installing the NPSC's testing app. The results of your app testing will be anonymous among the hundreds of thousands of other anonymous test results in the state. Governments receive reports on the average performance results for geographic areas like a 1 kilometer block, census block, city or county.

Are there other services like this?

The Mobile Pulse service tests and shows results a lot like Google Maps does on a phone. If you are running the Google Maps app while driving, it records your car's speed and location and then combines the anonymous test results with other Google Map users to show traffic congestion. Mobile Pulse uses this same concept but for wireless network performance.

How secure is the service?

The NPSC is working with analytics firm, Mobile Pulse, to ensure privacy and security of this service. Mobile Pulse, not the government, is responsible for securing the service and ensuring your privacy. They use security practices based on FBI and national criminal data protection standards with encryption and two-factor authentication to protect the app and test results.

Is there a cost?

There is no cost for residents to download and install the free app from the app stores.

What if I still have questions?

The Mobile Pulse testing app is on a volunteer basis. You can uninstall the app at any time. If you have more questions, please contact the Chief Privacy Officer at Mobile Pulse, Kevin Capp, through the Mobile Pulse contact page.